



Environmental performance ›

Ecosystem services ›



Biodiversity and ecosystem services

As part of the expectations of Protect Tomorrow. Today., ExxonMobil strives to be a leader in safeguarding the ability of the environment to provide ecosystem services — the direct and indirect benefits people obtain from the environment, such as food, water, shelter, clean

air and cultural identity.

Our approach to managing biodiversity and ecosystem services recognizes factors such as the rarity of individual species, their roles in different ecosystems and habitats, their vulnerabilities and their cultural significance. For our major projects, biodiversity and ecosystem services are taken into account during our environmental risk management processes.

Protecting biodiversity

We plan our activities based on a scientific understanding of the biodiversity in our areas of operation. As part of our commitment to operating in an environmentally responsible manner, we conduct research and support initiatives to help improve biodiversity management. In 2015, we contributed approximately \$4 million to organizations focused on biodiversity protection and land conservation.

For many years, we have sponsored research efforts to study the effects of sound on marine mammals to avoid potentially adverse impacts of our operations. In 2015, Exxon Neftegas Limited, an ExxonMobil subsidiary in Russia, conducted a seismic program covering all three Sakhalin-1 offshore license areas. Throughout the design and implementation of the program, being protective of the western gray whale — a species classified as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) — was very important. Our detailed monitoring and mitigation strategy was based on 17 years of research on these animals and their habitat and the best practices developed and enhanced during previous seismic operations, as well as knowledge of the timing and behaviors of whales in the area.

We also support research aimed at improving our management of biodiversity. For example, ExxonMobil's Upstream Research Company is investigating the application of environmental genomics in biodiversity assessment and monitoring. Advances in DNA technologies have enabled the rapid characterization of the biodiversity of environmental samples. This has the potential to improve our ability to manage environmental risks by significantly reducing the time required for environmental surveys and analyses compared with conventional methods.

Up Close: Protecting the biodiversity of Bioko Island

Bioko Island, located 20 miles off the Gulf of Guinea coast in West Africa, is one of the most biologically diverse places on earth, with critical habitat for seven species of endangered monkeys and four species of nesting sea turtles. For nearly 20 years, the ExxonMobil Foundation has supported the Bioko Island Biodiversity Protection Program (BBPP) in Equatorial Guinea, in association with Drexel University and the National University of Equatorial Guinea, to conserve the island's biodiversity through educational and research programs as well as conservation activities.

Since 2008, the ExxonMobil Foundation has provided core funding for the Moka Wildlife Center, the country's first and only biological field station. Here, BBPP hosts educational programs designed to illustrate the value of biodiversity and to foster an environmental ethic in local children. To build upon this initiative, we sponsored the construction of an interpretative nature trail in 2015.



Photo — Local children reading a book series developed by BBPP learn about the importance of biodiversity in their lives and for their nation.

The trail runs adjacent to the BBPP Moka Wildlife Center and allows visitors to observe the local fauna and flora up close. The trail is also marked with signs that display various facts about the biodiversity in the area. In addition to providing information on the various plants and animals, the signs explain their use or importance to the local community. Local children in Moka and other nearby villages can visit the center, walk the trail and learn more about the importance of preserving the biodiversity of Bioko Island.



Dr. Mary Katherine Gonder
Director, Bioko Biodiversity Protection

Program

“The ExxonMobil-BBPP relationship is an internationally recognized model of successful corporate, government and international education cooperative activities. This two-decade relationship built a solid foundation for saving the biodiversity of Bioko Island, for providing sustainable livelihoods for Equatoguineans who depend on the nation’s rich natural resources for survival and for improving the international profile of Equatorial Guinea.”

Video — Protecting biodiversity in Equatorial Guinea

Working in protected areas

ExxonMobil manages elevated biodiversity or species risks by examining the environmental context of the areas where we operate and ensuring adequate protective measures are developed and implemented. We periodically screen the locations of our major operating facilities against databases of the IUCN and World Protected Areas. In 2015, an estimated 25 percent of our major operating facilities were within 5 kilometers of designated environmentally sensitive areas. These data inform our emergency response contingency plans and environmental impact surveys by helping prioritize areas needing special protection.

We continue to collaborate with the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC) to develop educational and outreach programs through the Corporate Lands for Learning (CLL) program. Currently, we have five CLL programs certified at or near our facilities, including the Billings (Montana) refinery, the Baton Rouge (Louisiana) complex, our Clinton (New Jersey) research facility, the Fife (United Kingdom) ethylene plant and Lentol Garden in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, New York. These programs help us promote environmental awareness, biodiversity and science initiatives in our workforce and local communities. In 2010, the Cold Lake operations of our Canadian affiliate, Imperial Oil, became the first oil and gas operator in Canada to be certified by the WHC. This site was re-certified in 2015, demonstrating our continued commitment to conservation excellence.

By the end of 2015, we actively managed approximately 7,100 acres of land for the benefit of wildlife, which includes assessing habitats, developing plans to enhance or sustain wildlife, implementing the plans and monitoring the status at 16 of our sites through 18 certified programs. Over the past year, there has been a reduction in the number

of wildlife habitat programs and acreage certified through WHC. This change reflects the consolidation of sites to our Houston campus and the sale or disposition of previously owned sites. It is our hope that the new owners will continue management of the properties for wildlife habitat valuable to those communities. During the site consolidation process, our employees turned their efforts toward certification of the Houston campus property, achieved in 2014, and continue to seek opportunities at other locations for enhancing wildlife habitat and providing environmental education to local communities.



Photo — Rocky Mountain College wildlife biology students and members of the Billings Senior High School STEM Society engage in habitat research at ExxonMobil's Billings refinery's wildlife habitat area in Montana.

One of the recent highlights related to our long-term association with WHC is at our Billings refinery. The 110-acre WHC-certified wildlife habitat at our Billings refinery has served as a learning lab since 2002 for Rocky Mountain College and, starting in 2015, Billings Senior High School. The refinery's conservation efforts have earned international

recognition by the WHC and the habitat program has received WHC certification for a decade. In 2015, the site achieved WHC CLL certification, allowing the refinery to more fully use the habitat area for education purposes, especially field research. The students from Rocky Mountain College and Billings Senior High School are making good use of the opportunity and have recently collaborated to install nets for a fishery and turtle survey in an effort to enhance their environmental curricula.

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